

REMARKS

Claims 1-16 are pending in the present application. Claims 1-10 and 12-13 have been amended and claims 14-16 have been added herein. No new matter has been added.

Claims 1-5, 8-10, 12 and 13 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Lehman (U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0048939 A1, hereinafter "Lehman"). Other claims have been rejected as being obvious over Lehman in view of additional references. Applicant respectfully traverses these rejections.

Claim 1 has been amended to more clearly emphasize the invention and thereby distinguish over the prior art. Embodiments of the present invention relate to the compensation of measurements made on a mask. Accordingly, claim 1 now recites "measuring optical properties of a structure of the mask using a measuring system; [and] automatically selecting a stored correction data record from a correction database in a manner dependent on at least one parameter that characterizes the mask, the correction data record including information related to errors in the measuring system." Measurement results associated with the measured optical properties are combined with the correction data record to produce a corrected measurement result.

Applicant respectfully submits that the prior art of record does not teach or suggest such a scheme that compensates for errors in the measuring system. For example, in Lehman, pixels of the mask are compared with pixels of a master image. Par. [0037], which is quoted in the rejection. Lehman never accounts for the fact that the pixels of the inspected image may include errors due to the measuring system that determined those pixels. Certainly, Lehman never teaches or suggests combining these measuring results

with a correction data record that includes "information related to errors in the measuring system." As a result, claim 1 is allowable.

Claims 2-8 and 14-16 depend from claim 1 and add further limitations. It is respectfully submitted that these claims are allowable over the references of record in view of their dependence on an allowable claim as well as the additional limitations.

Claim 9, as amended, specifically recites "a data processor for automatically selecting a correction data record from the correction database in a manner dependent on at least one parameter that characterizes the mask, the correction data record including information related to errors in the measuring system." As discussed above with respect to claim 1, the references of record do not teach or suggest a correction data record that includes information related to errors in a measuring system. Therefore, claim 9 is allowable.

Claims 10-11 depend from claim 9 and add further limitations. It is respectfully submitted that these claims are allowable over the references of record in view of their dependence on an allowable claim as well as the additional limitations.

Claim 12 specifically recites "combining measurement results associated with the measured optical properties with the correction data record associated with the mask in a data processing device to produce a corrected measurement result." The correction data record "includes information for the correction of inhomogeneities of an illumination system." The references of record do not teach or suggest the limitations of claim 12 and, therefore, this claim is allowable.

Claim 13 specifically recites "a correction database with at least one stored correction data record, wherein the correction data record includes information for the

correction of inhomogeneities of an illumination system." The references of record do not teach or suggest the limitations of claim 13 and, therefore, this claim is allowable.

Applicant submits that the claims are in condition for allowance. No new matter has been added by this amendment. If the Examiner should have any questions, please contact Applicant's attorney at the number listed below. In the event that the enclosed fees are insufficient, please charge any additional fees required to keep this application pending, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 50-1065.

Respectfully submitted,

Date

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